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MSGNO 27 (STXX) *03/21/86* *22:22:24.4.1*
 ZCZC 03:20:36Z (ST)
 EMI DTG : 86032121140967

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 FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1599
 INFO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 0444
 RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0063
 RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0365
 RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0245
 RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0320
 RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 9585
 RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 0364
 RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
 BT

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EZ2:

USIA FOR AR/CENTAM

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PINS, ES

SUBJECT: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT (AGEUS) LEADER
 - ARRESTED BY NATIONAL POLICE

1. (U) SUMMARY

UNIVERSITY CONTACTS CALLED THE EMBASSY ON THE MORNING OF
 MARCH 21 TO REPORT THE ARREST THE NIGHT BEFORE BY THE
 NATIONAL POLICE OF RUFINO ANTONIO QUESADA, PRESIDENT OF
 THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (AGEUS).
 WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO RECEIVE TELEPHONE INQUIRIES
 FROM THE U.S. WHICH, GIVEN QUESADA'S LEFT-WING
 PROMINENCE AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS WITH ORGANIZATIONS

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IN THE U.S., WE CAN EXPECT TO TURN INTO AN AVALANCHE.
END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY CONTACTS, RUFINO ANTONIO QUESADA WAS ARRESTED AT HIS HOME BY MEMBERS OF THE "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BATTALION" OF THE NATIONAL POLICE ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 20. QUESADA'S MOTHER HAS ALREADY RECEIVED A STANDARD NOTIFICATION CABLE OF THE ARREST FROM THE NATIONAL POLICE. THE NATIONAL POLICE HAVE 15 DAYS TO CHARGE HIM AND CONSIGN HIM TO THE COURTS OR TO RELEASE HIM.

3. (C) QUESADA IS KNOWN TO US AS A MEMBER OF THE FPL AND IS POLITICALLY VERY ACTIVE AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (AGEUS), WHICH IS VIRULENTLY ANTI-GOES AND FREQUENTLY STAGES DEMONSTRATIONS AND PUBLISHES DIATRIBES AGAINST ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE SALVADORAN SECURITY FORCES. QUESADA WAS THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE "COMMITTEE FOR PEACE" : WHICH ORGANIZED THE "NATIONAL DRIVE FOR PEACE AND DIALOGUE" IN DECEMBER 1985 ON THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. THE CONFERENCE WAS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ATTENDED BY LEFT WING ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVED AS A SORT OF SOLIDARITY REVIVAL MEETING FOR THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES.

4. (U) QUESADA WAS ALSO ONE OF 11 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY WHOSE NAMES APPEARED ON A COMMUNIQUE OSTENSIBLY ISSUED BY THE "SECRET ANTI-COMMUNIST ARMY" (ESA) IN JULY 1985. AT THAT TIME, EMBASSY RECEIVED NUMEROUS LETTERS FROM THE U.S. DEMANDING PROTECTION FOR THE INDIVIDUALS NAMED. OUR OWN REPORTS SUGGESTED THAT THE COMMUNIQUE WAS PLANTED BY A GROUP OF LEFTIST STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY TO FRIGHTEN RIVAL GROUPS. A FEW LETTERS FROM THE U.S. ALSO SUGGESTED THAT QUESADA HAD BEEN SHOT IN JULY, BUT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION CONFIRMING THAT. OUR UNIVERSITY SOURCE ALLEGED THAT QUESADA HAD BEEN SHOT AT, BUT NOT HURT, IN JULY AFTER THE ESA DEATH THREAT LIST WAS PUBLISHED, AND CONSIDERED THIS PROOF POSITIVE THAT THE LIST WAS LEGITIMATE.

5. (U) ACCORDING TO OUR UNIVERSITY SOURCE, QUESADA IS MARRIED TO A U.S. CITIZEN, ROBYN BRAVERMAN, WHO IN LATE AUGUST 1985 LED A DELEGATION FROM THE U.S. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (USSA) TO EL SALVADOR, AND WAS BRIEFED BY THE EMBASSY. QUESADA APPARENTLY MARRIED BRAVERMAN, WHO LIVES IN OREGON, DURING A TRIP HE SUBSEQUENTLY MADE TO THE WEST COAST OF THE U.S. WHILE IN THE U.S., QUESADA REPORTEDLY VISITED 40 CITIES TO SPEAK ABOUT PURPORTED GOVERNMENT REPRESSION OF THE UNIVERSITY. WE HAVE SINCE RECEIVED LETTERS FROM VARIOUS U.S. UNIVERSITIES DENOUNCING OPPRESSION OF STUDENTS. AGEUS IS REPORTEDLY ORGANIZING A SUPPORT NETWORK OF "SISTER UNIVERSITIES" IN THE U.S. TO PROVIDE MORAL SUPPORT AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND ITS STUDENTS.

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TEN UNIVERSITIES ARE REPORTED TO BE ENLISTED SO FAR.
6. (U) IN SAN SALVADOR, THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HAS
ALREADY SWUNG INTO ACTION TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION
AGAINST THE ARREST. CALLS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION (CDHES), THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE
FEDERATION OF CENTRAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
(FEUCA), AND THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 04130
USIA FOR AR/CENTAM

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PINS, ES

SUBJECT: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT (AGEUS) LEADER
ALREADY, LESS THAN 24 HOURS SINCE HIS ARREST, THE
EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED 12 CALLS FROM THE U.S. ASKING ABOUT
THE CASE AND REQUESTING, IN ONE CASE ON BEHALF OF
FRIENDS OF MS. BRAVERMAN, EMBASSY INTERVENTION TO FREE
QUESADA. ONE CALLER SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN CONTACTED BY
THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA (WOLA). ANOTHER
CALLER SAID HE HAD BEEN CONTACTED BY ANOTHER
REPRESENTATIVE OF AGEUS PRESENTLY ON A SPEAKING TOUR OF
THE EASTERN U.S. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CALLING THE
EMBASSY INCLUDE THE BERKLEY CHAPTER OF COMMITTEES IN
<> SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR (<><>CISPES<><>), THE
AMERICAN FRIEND SERVICE COMMITTEE OF AMHERST
MASSACHUSETTS, AND STUDENTS FROM VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES
VISITED BY QUESADA ON HIS LAST TOUR.

7. (LOU) THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL POLICE (PN),
COL. REVELO, TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE PN HAD PICKED UP
QUESADA FOR QUESTIONING, BUT INTENDED TO RELEASE HIM ON
THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 21, PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE
NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION EXPECTED.

8. (C) COMMENT: GIVEN QUESADA'S U.S. CONNECTION,
THERE WAS NO WAY HIS ARREST COULD GO UNNOTICED. WE
EXPECT A REACTION SIMILAR TO WHAT OCCURRED WITH THE
ARREST OF THE PRESS SECRETARY OF THE FMLN FRONT
NON-GOVERNMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (CDHES),
JOAQUIN CACERES, WHICH RESULTED IN NUMEROUS LETTERS,
CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES AND PHONE CALLS.

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END OF MESSAGE

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TEXT

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